
A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
Issue Zero October 1985
AMTIX!
MONTHLY SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR THE
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AMSTRAD



THE WORLD OF THE AMSTRAD IS ABOUT TO BURST WIDE OPEN!

Welcome to the first ever edition of AMTIX! — a new monthly magazine devoted to software for the Amstrad computers.

We've called this 'issue zero' in keeping with the odd mathematical notions of programmers who always think of the first item in a sequence as being 0. What it is in fact, is a taster to give you some idea of what to expect when issue 1 of AMTIX! goes on sale nationwide on the 17th October.

But first, a little bit of background about who 'we' are . . .

LET'S GO . . . !

The publisher of **AMTIX!** is Newsfield Publications, based in the south Shropshire town of Ludlow — a strange place to find a computer magazine you might think, but to the inhabitants of this ancient market town, computers have become an everyday matter. In January 1984 Newsfield launched the Spectrum software magazine **CRASH** and has seen it grow into one of Britain's most successful games oriented computer periodicals. In April of this year **CRASH** was followed by a second title for Commodore owners called **ZZAP! 64** which has rapidly established itself as the leading 64 games mag.

Now Ludlovians are learning to cope with the Amstrad as Newsfield launches its third computer title. If you are unfamiliar with either **CRASH** or **ZZAP! 64**, then here's an idea of what to expect in **AMTIX!**

Our editorial policy can best be summed up as being an 'interface' between the producers of software and yourself, the user. We don't see ourselves as being a separate entity, looking down God-like on the market, we join in. **AMTIX!** will provide a lively debating forum on both games and serious programs, hardware add-ons and utilities. We will be devoting an uncommonly large amount of space to readers' letters, so you can air your ideas, your bitches and your problems — and if we think you're wrong we'll tell you so in no uncertain terms!

But above all, **AMTIX!** is here to SUPPORT the entire market, to help its already healthy growth to something much bigger and better, to show that the Amstrad computers are great work stations and home entertainment centres all wrapped up in one.

Both CRASH and ZZAP! 64 have earned their spurs by being actively involved in the improvement of software and in promoting an interest in areas that some readers may have overlooked such as adventure and strategy games, telecommunications, music and the work of programmers. You can expect to see this lively mix in **AMTIX!** as well. That's why we say 'the world of the Amstrad is about to burst open'. **AMTIX!** is the doorway — just walk through . . .

GAMES REVIEWS

We've said something about the games reviewing team but almost as important is the way the reviews are handled. CRASH pioneered in the computer magazine market the notion of using three reviewers per game. The policy was continued in ZZAP! 64 and **AMTIX!** will be no different. With the mixed opinions of three people you get a better balanced view of any game. As you can see in this mini issue, the review of *Way of the Exploding Fist* is laid out as you can expect to see all main reviews in **AMTIX!** (the others are examples of the mini-reviews to be found in issue 1 in our Comprehensive Software Guide).

A few paragraphs introduce you generally to the game, its scenario, content, objectives and aims — there may even be a few hints and tips. This is followed by the three reviewers' critical statements and, under the heading 'Comments' (not shown this time in *Way of the Exploding Fist* because of space), there follows a list of technical specifications and brief critical comments on the more important aspects of any game, such as colour, graphics and sound. Each review will be rounded off by a list of seven ratings: **Presentation, Graphics, Playability, Sound, Addictive qualities, Value for money** and an **Overall** rating. Against each there will be a percentage. More details about these ratings and what importance you should attach to each of them, will be given in issue 1 of **AMTIX!**.

THE TEAM

The editorial offices in Ludlow are headed up by Roger Kean and Jeremy Spencer. Roger is best known for having launched CRASH on an unsuspecting world and his numerous appearances on telly defending this action. He's played almost every game known very badly and so acts as a valuable *common man in the street* when the arcade freaks get out of hand. Jeremy brings his experience as Newsfield's software editor to **AMTIX!** but he's probably best known for his wire haired terrier, Poddy, who keeps the office plants well watered.

After these two exalted personages come the maxions and minions who actually do all the real work. Robin Candy is famous throughout all Britain for his CRASH Playing Tips — you either love him or hate him. He's been playing games on the Amstrad for ages and before that for years on the Spectrum. As many games are converted from Spectrum originals, you can expect a wealth of hints, tips and cheats in the future.

To bring you the reviews we have a highly experienced team of gamesters who will be pooling both their skills and opinions with ages ranging from 14 up to 30 something. Some, like young Ben Stone, Mark Hamer and Robin Candy, are local school kids, others like Gary Penn, Julian Rignall and Gary Liddon are big city lounge lizards with a misspent youth in the arcades, twitchy trigger fingers and experience in writing reviews for magazines like *Personal Computer Games, ZZAP! 64* and *Big K* (but we don't hold that against them). Then there are the calmer spirits like Chris Passey, who has been reviewing for CRASH for almost two years, and the big boys Jeremy Spencer and Roger Kean.

PRIZE COMPETITIONS!

You can be sure that every issue of **AMTIX!** will be chock full of competitions. In the past we've had as much as £10,000 worth of prizes to give away in one issue, about as much as some magazines offer in a year! Okay, we can't guarantee as much as that **every** issue, but there will always be at least 3-4 exciting competitions each month with a wide range of prizes, but especially the latest in hardware and software both of games and of the more serious sort.

On top of that, you can also expect to see readers' special offers to your benefit arranged between **AMTIX!** and its advertisers that will let you get your hands on the things you want. What more can you ask?!

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We don't have to tell you much about what you'll be getting in AMTIX! because this 16 page taster is our best advert, but just in case you haven't got round to reading all of it yet, you can be sure of a magazine 100% devoted to Amstrad software and hardware, packed with information on the very latest games, utilities and business software that will keep you right up to date. But most important of all, AMTIX! will be a good read. And all that will be dropping through your letter box every month for no further effort on your part.
As a subscriber to AMTIX! you also receive another benefit — 50p discount off every single piece of software you buy from AMTIX! Mail Order which, together with CRASH and ZZAP! 64 Mail Order, is one of the biggest software mail order houses in the country. There will be more details on that in issue 1.
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WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

Producer: Melbourne House
Retail price: £9.95

Melbourne House's karate simulation explodes on to the Amstrad. As a young grasshopper you must work your way up from being a complete novice to achieving the magical 10th Dan. To help you gain this award against your opponent, there are some 18 manoeuvres at your disposal.

The various kicks that are accessable (keys or joystick) are your movements to success. The **flying kick**, best used when your opponent is standing and not blocking, is an extremely powerful manoeuvre that renders the opposition helpless. The **high kick** also deals a blow to the face but is risky to use as it can be countered by going into a crouch and using either a low punch or a forward sweep. Both the **mid** and **short kicks** are effective in close combat — the mid kick is the least effective because it is easily countered by crouching or by a straight forward block. The **forward** and **backward sweeps** are probably the most effective moves in the game. To use them you must first crouch down, press fire and pull down on one of the joystick's diagonals. A forward or backward sweep can be countered with a short jab kick (but only while the character is crouching) or by somersaulting out of danger.

The **roundhouse kick** has two purposes: one, to kick an enemy in the face (but it often takes too long to perform to be effective); two, it can be used to turn your character around, just start the kick and then abort it half way through execution. The **high back kick**, is the reverse of the high kick and is only effective if your opponent has slipped past you.

As well as kicks there are 3 punches that may be used, the **jab punch** being most effective and the easiest to use because of the speed with which it can be performed, and it is particularly useful in tight spots. The **high punch** is also easily executed and highly effective when your opponent is close in. When in the crouch position a **low punch** can be dealt to the enemy, again this is an effective move but it can be easily countered by a jab kick

There are two somersaults, forwards and backwards, and a jump that can be used to get out of harm's way. The main use for somersaults and jumps is to get out of danger caused by forward or backward sweeps.

A two-player option is available, where each plays against the other simultaneously. In this mode there are four rounds with the highest scorer winning. If you play against the computer, then the game continues until you are either kicked out or you reach the 10th Dan. Unlike the CBM64 version, there is only one background, but this is hardly a serious drawback.

CRITICISM

"Learning how to use each of the moves properly can take quite a few games but once mastered you are unlikely to forget them in a hurry. The graphics in *Way of the Exploding Fist* are excellent. The sprites are wonderfully defined and the movement of both characters is very realistic. This version isn't quite as good as the CBM 64 game, largely because the sound isn't anything like as thrilling, but it is still worthy and should provide many hours of enjoyment. The greatest advantage that it has over many other games is that it's instantly playable and should appeal to just about everyone."

"One of the first things I noticed in *Way of the Exploding Fist* is how flexible the characters are, no prancing stick figures here. Having contrived to make so many different movements possible from the joystick, the result is both realistic and confusing at first. It's well worth playing a few rounds just to get the knack of making your man jab, leap and kick at the right moments. This is a great arcade scoring game as well as wonderful family entertainment."

"Karate seems to be all the vogue at the moment on the small screen, perhaps because we've had to wait for programming skills to catch up with the requirement for realistic animation and fast graphics. In Way of the Exploding Fist, *Melbourne House have scored a great hit with a version of 'Karate Champ'. The controls are sensibly thought out and make it immediately playable, although skill is required to become a master. I've been playing it since I got the copy — I may soon even be a master"*

Presentation	87%
Graphics	91%
Playability	89%
Sound	63%
Addictive qualities	89%
Value for money	83%
Overall	88%

FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING

Producer: Elite
Retail price: £8.95

The object of *Frank Bruno's Boxing* is to defeat 8 boxers in succession in order to gain the world heavyweight title. To defeat a boxer you must learn their individual styles and then knock them down three times. This is done by reducing the opponent's status to zero (by repeated hits, when the punch power indicator reaches maximum the right hook or upper cut can be used) but you must also dodge the other boxer's punches. Should your opponent knock you down three times then the game will end.

When a boxer is defeated you will be given an EVBA code (Elite Video Boxing Association). This code enables you to access the next boxer, just enter the code and start the B-side of the tape but you must remember to always use the same name.

As Frank you have a variety of possible moves including: guard up or down, left or right punch and dodge, right hook, upper cut and duck. The type of punch delivered depends on whether your guard is up or down; if up then you will deliver a punch to the head, if down then Frank will do a body punch. The right hook or upper cut, as mentioned, can only be used when the KO indicator is flashing.

All eight opponents vary quite a bit in size, meaness and fighting styles. The first, Canadian Crusher, is big and lumbering but he's quite easy to defeat because of this. Fling Long Chop is small, fast and a master of the

MIRRORSOFT

SEPTEMBER SIZZLERS



BOULDER DASH

One of the great classic games of all time is now available to even more of you – Amstrad and Atari owners everywhere can now experience the ultimate underground journey.

Search through the 16 caves, each with 5 levels of difficulty, and collect as many jewels as quickly as possible. Don't forget to block the amoebas, transform the butterflies, or outmanoeuvre the fire-flies – or you'll never get out alive!

Available September 5th

Amstrad CPC464 and Atari 48K versions back-to-back on one tape at £9.95.

ASHKERON!

'Ashkeron is something for everyone: a complex, challenging, witty game for the adventurer, and its got pretty pics for the zap'em crowd. An excellent game – buy it!' – *Home Computing Weekly*

'It is highly professional, sophisticated software… in its walls lies a challenge everyone will find interesting and rewarding' – *Crash Micro*

'This game gets my royal assent' – *Your Spectrum*

'A charming graphic adventure' – *MicroScope*

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Spectrum 48K £5.95

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The 8th Personal Computer World Show



martial arts, beware of his kicks! Andra Puncheredov, from the USSR, is a fast dancing Russian who enjoys headbutting you. Tribal Trouble has a vicious temper and he lands punches with unnerving accuracy. Frenchie appears to be suave and sophisticated but is ready to make you see stars. Ravioli Mafiosi knows all the dirty tricks and is quite prepared to use them. Antipodean Andy is Australia's champ, he feels no pain. Peter Perfect is the current world champ and as his name suggests he is the most neat and accurate boxer in history.

Elite have transferred the arcade hit, 'Punch Out', brilliantly to the home computer capturing the complex, animated graphics and atmosphere. Each boxer has his own personality which makes the game great fun to play. *Frank Bruno's Boxing* is instantly playable, very addictive and the variety of boxers makes for plenty of scope. Overall a polished game that most people should enjoy.

Overall AMTIX! rating: 87%

DUN DARACH

Producer: Gargoyle Games
Retail price: £9.95

The hero of two cult Spectrum games has, at last, made his first venture on to the Amstrad. *Dun Darach* is a legendary city in which your friend and charioteer, Loeg, has been imprisoned by the evil sorceress, Skar. Your task as Cuchulainn the Great is, by solving various puzzles, to rescue Loeg and escape from the city.

The principle concern in *Dun Darach* is with money. With money you can buy objects necessary to solve the puzzles. Making money is a game in itself and there are several honest and dishonest ways to do it: you can try buying and selling at a profit; stealing goods and selling them (which is highly profitable but also risky, watch out for Ryde, the local Yeoman who, if you are caught stealing, will gladly take all the objects that you possess and your money); by banking your money and letting it build up slowly (1% interest is awarded for every day your money stays in the bank) or you could always pay a visit to the gambling houses and get rich quick or become bust even quicker.

Besides the traders, who don't move, there are 10 other characters that inhabit *Dun Darach*. These are represented by one basic male or female character, each one is fully animated in great detail and even their hair blows in the wind. If another character besides yourself or a trader is on screen then a cursor made up of their first initial follows their movement across the screen, and their full name appears at the bottom, which makes identification easy. As well as being fully animated each character has their own personality — some are pickpockets, one a gossip and another an exiled map maker but all have one thing in common, they each want something and in return they will each give an object to you. Of these objects some will be useful and others will almost give a clue to another task that must be performed before your goal is achieved.

There is more than meets the eye in *Dun Darach*. The graphics with their 3D 'camera views' are superb, some of the best yet to grace the Amstrad, but it is the atmosphere created within the game that makes it a real winner; you can almost feel you know the main characters and it can be quite a disappointment to actually complete the game because you suffer a sense of loss at withdrawing from the fictional world that Gargoyle Games have created. And there's another bonus, unlike many conversions *Dun Darach* differs from the Spectrum original in having a different solution, so in its own way this is an original game.

Overall AMTIX! rating: 93%

AMWARDS!

It may only be a sample issue but **AMTIX!** *is determined to get off to a good start and what better way than previewing TWO of the better games that will be gracing the the AMSTRAD soon?*

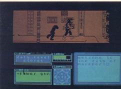
MARSPORT

First off this month is the new game from **Gargoyle Games**. *Marsport* is the first of a planned trilogy called *The Siege of Earth* and is somewhat of a departure from Gargoyle's previous release *Dun Darach* as this is set in a science fiction future, and the game offers the player rather more physical action. As Commander John Marsh (essentially Cuchulainn the Hero in a space suit) it is your task to find the plans that will save earth from the hive creatures, the Sept. These plans, unfortunately, are held inside the memory banks of Marsport's computers and Marsport is now an outpost for the evil Sept.

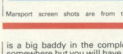
Graphically similar to *Dun Darach*, *Marsport* is played within a city but this city isn't a straight forward flat plan, it is best described as a sort of 3 dimensional tower block with levels linked by lifts. The shops of *Dun Darach* have been replaced with wall units that supply various items essential to your mission. Other types of unit include Factor units, for making things out of other objects; Key stations, for unlocking either locked doors or locked wall units; Lockers, for storing objects; Charge units, for powering objects and there are the wall units that house the two types of Robot, the servobots and the wardens. The servobots are harmless and just fly around doing nothing but the wardens often mistake you for one of the Sept and will kill you.

A game wouldn't be complete without its host of problems and nasty aliens and *Marsport* is no exception. The problems come in the form of finding objects, learning how to utilise them and cracking codes etc. While the aliens come in the form of the evil Sept, little warriors patrol the corridors and will kill on contact unless you zap em and there





Marsport screen shots are from the



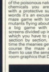
is a big baddy in the complex somewhere but you will have to find out how to deal with him yourselves.

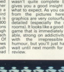
Marsport promises to be a very exciting game that should appeal to the arcade adventurer with various tricky problems that should keep you going for a while. It is due for release sometime around October/November.



ON THE RUN

The latest offering from **Design Design** comes in the form of *On the Run*. The basic idea behind the game is to venture into an area that has been affected by chemical warfare. Your task is to retrieve flasks of deadly chemicals from this area and because of the poisonous nature of these chemicals you are equipped with a protective suit. In other words it's an excuse to have a maze game with lots of weird mutants flying about. But this is a big game with some 300 screens divided up into sections which you have to get through section by section, while each time the meanies get nastier. Of course the maze also allows them to use the sensuous mush room graphics that DD have had up their sleeves for ages.





Our preproduction copy wasn't quite complete but it gives you a good insight as to what to expect. As you can see from the pictures here the graphics are very colourful and detailed (especially the mush rooms). It looks like a good maze game that is immediately playable, strong on addictivity and with the irrepressible DD humour, but you'll just have to wait until next month for a full review.



Spectrum version



BEGINNING THE EXPLORATION

Adventure games have always been an important aspect of computers, ever since the main framers got bored with listing code. The great problem early on for men like Scott Adams was how to compress the program required to run an adventure game developed with millions of bytes in mind into the average home computer's few thousand. Yet almost immediately, very playable adventures appeared for the Spectrum, and with a better understanding of the Z80 processor, recent programs have packed in an incredible amount. The level of sophistication in the home computer adventure program would be the envy of those main framers of olde.

The Amstrad has benefitted by its processor compatability with the Spectrum, for it is on the latter machine that the best adventures have appeared in Britain in the past (excepting, perhaps, Infocom's disk-based CMB64 ones). This means there is a wealthy store of conversions for the Amstrad explorer to get his or her teeth into already, and there are plenty more on the way besides Amstrad original material.

AMTIX! will be looking closely at adventure games and trying to avoid getting hung up on the definition of adventure when it comes to the 'grey areas'. The classic text-only game is easily defined and belongs firmly to the genre's main stream; so too does the more recent text-and-graphics adventure, both sorts being typified by **Level 9**'s games. But if strategy has crept into arcade games, so too has adventure — at one end the platform game like **Hewson**'s *Technician Ted* has adventure elements (where do you discover the appropriate object, what does it allow you to do next that you couldn't do before collecting it?), and at the other, games like *Dragontorc of Avalon*, also by Hewson Consultants, are adventures played with graphics and not text. Further, a game like *Lords of Midnight* enters into battle as both an adventure and a strategy war game. The truth is that valuable insights may be gained in these games by both camps having their different say, and that underlines the excitement of computer games in general — they haven't stood still but have matured, become increasingly complex and involving, and the distinctions that used to exist between one sort and another have merged to form a richer feast for the player.

The Adventure games column in **AMTIX!**, then, will pay attention to the various forms of adventure, but it will, in reviews, point out how the programs interact with the player in a dialogue (started by Derek Brewster in CRASH magazine) with programmers in general. The aim is to improve and extend the range of adventures through constructive criticism and examination, and hopefully to encourage more people to enter into this world of the interactive novel. Part of the dialogue, of course, will be hints and tips for those who get stuck, and this will be a two-way process because we want to receive tips as well as dispense them! So if you have anything to say or anything to ask, write in now to **AMTIX! Magazine, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

WHAT'S IN A STRATEGY?

The term 'strategy game' has been used to describe a huge range of different games, from strip poker to bridge, from role-playing adventures to management games, so in this first, short piece it is worth saying a few words about what comprises strategy games.

To many people, the very word conjures up images of boring text-only games played by square, middle-aged computer owners trying to relive their childhood. This could hardly be further from the truth and some strategy games represent the ultimate progression in computer entertainment.There are several branches of strategy in computer gaming. It can hardly have escaped your notice that, ever since people became tired of the simpler arcade games the genre has been getting ever more sophisticated — and winning, or beating your latest high score, is no longer just a matter of being quick with the joystick, but more of combining arcade skills with some strategy. A good example might be *Jet Set Willy*, where in order to collect all the items one has to work out the best route (or the best POKEs!) to take, which is a form of strategy. At the other end of this branch, strategy, in its purist sense, is a vital element of *Code Name Mat*.

Another branch incorporates the different sorts of management games available — these have been popular ever since the very beginning of home computers. *Football Manager* from Addictive Games is probably the most successful game of this variety, the aim being to manage a football team. This game continues to amaze me in that, being several years after it first came out, it still sells better than many newer, supposedly superb, games. More than almost any other, it is proof of the great potential that lies in strategy games. Others in this vein offer the chance of running your own company; boring, you might think? Not necessarily, there are a few already out for the Amstrad that simulate running a software house, something that every computer owner I have ever met thinks he can do much better than the professionals. These games provide the opportunity to test some of those claims!

Strategy games, then, range from the more complex arcade games such as *Code Name Mat* through the 'purist' games like *Football Manager*, the 'extremely purist' wargames and on to, surely the strategic pinnacle, Chess. Like Chess, other board games may be included such as *Scrabble* (now available for the Amstrad) and *Monopoly*, shortly available no doubt for the Amstrad after its release on the Spectrum.

As you can see, the concept of a strategy game is slightly wider than just 'text-only, boring war games'! So what is there in the way of good strategy games? Alongside other machines the Amstrad has fared very well — principally in conversions of the better offerings for other home micros, but also with some original material too. I have mentioned several programs already, all of which are now available on the Amstrad, and there are more besides; and still a number of conversions forthcoming, notably in the *Lords of Midnight* category. If this classic, superb strategy game is as good as it promises to be, then it will be well worth getting, and is sure to feature in this column, so watch future issues!

One feature of the strategy games sector is that it has tended in the past to be dominated by a few software houses, each of which then becomes very specialised; PSS, CCS, Beyond, Addictive Games and Games Workshop are just some of the more prominent names (although Games Workshop has dropped out of software recently); so as well as actually reviewing strategy games, and doing features on the different sections of this kind of software, this patch of AMTIX! will be revealing more about how these companies work in future issues.

DAVID LESTER

COMMUNICATIONS

By Chris Honey

The current demand for mass data communications began in the 50s with the growth of computing. Initially simple telegraph circuits were used to pass information between source and destination. With the ever increasing demand it was inevitable that telegraph circuits could no longer satisfy requirements so the Public Switched Telephone Network, with its vast coverage of potential users, was looked upon as a prime candidate for expansion. Techniques were developed to exploit the higher information carrying capacity of telephone circuits, designed specifically for voice communications.

The results now affect our lives daily, everywhere data communications is taking on a larger role, but unfortunately for the newcomer the subject is almost overwhelming. Throughout the forthcoming months **AMTIX!** will unfold the world of communications for Amstrad users, starting with the basics.

VIEWDATA

Viewdata is a system employing text and graphics for transmission of information. The system uses 16 colours and simple mosiac graphics with a text capability of up to 24 lines of 40 characters. A special terminal or software package is needed to display information transmitted in Viewdata format. Many other services make use of Viewdata.

PRESTEL

Prestel is the Viewdata service run by British Telecom. It consists of a network of minicomputers distributed around the country linked together by the telephone system. Access to Prestel is achieved by a local phone call, even though you may be accessing a distant computer for the information you require. Prestel is fully interactive and allows data to be sent to it, for applications such as teleshopping and ticket reservations.

TELETEXT

The Teletext services, Ceefax and Oracle, available as standard on many televisions are a variation of the Viewdata format. With special hardware it is possible to receive Teletext on your computer. Telesoftware programs may also be downloaded from Teletext.

BULLETIN BOARDS

Bulletin Boards operate as dial up information services where information can be retrieved and stored. Many services have mail box facilities where messages can be left for other users. Facilities are available for scanning your mailbox, for unread messages, or for mail left by specific users. Some services such as British Telecom Gold and EasyLink, are based upon the mail box idea, but also incorporate other features such as Telex.

MODEMS

Computer information is digital, signals are either on or off, and are inherently different from the analogue speech signals used over the telephone. To allow data to be transmitted over telephone lines a MODEM is used. Inside a **MODEM** is a **MO**dulator whose job is to encode outgoing digital information into audible tones, and a **DEM**odulator to perform the reverse process of converting audible data back into its digital form.

RS232

Of course there needs to be some standard interface for connecting MODEMS, terminals, and other serial equipment to computers. One of the most popular standards (certainly after its exposure on TV's Spitting Image programme) widely in use is known as RS232. RS232 is simply the code assigned to the interface, by the Electronic Industries Association, that defines the signals and connection details for use under the standard.

These and many other items of communications hardware will be dealt with in detail in future issues of **AMTIX!**.

Chris Honey is a director of Honeysoft Ltd.

RENDERING AN ACCOUNT OF YOURSELF

Few overworked businessmen actually enjoy book keeping; that's understandable, but it's a pity. Anybody running a commercial enterprise suffers by not having access to an up to date set of accounts. A great deal has been made of the computer's role in the 'information revolution', sentiments that make a great deal of sense when considering company accounts. Computers can reduce the cost of keeping accurate records and make the extraction and compilation of information easier. Amstrad computers have the potential to be used as business machines, especially when disk drives are used. But, using computers for accounting is not a panacea, it could just as easily turn into a disaster.

It's a good idea to keep computers in perspective — they are machines for information storage, retrieval and calculation, but we don't need to concern ourselves with **how** the computer actually does the work. There is, however, the requirement that we should should get to know computers, and understand their funny little ways. Take for example the case of the 'most valuable cassette'; isn't odd how computers know just which ones to chew? Lesson; keep back up copies or lose your mind.

Choosing the appropriate software is also vital, get it wrong there and the only game you'll want to play with your Straddles is rugby. The choice of business software is considerable. Packages range from the simple and relatively easy to use *Easievat*, from Kuma, to the sophisticated and powerful programs from Gemini Marketing or Cornix. Some accounting operations, like home budgeting and simple accounting, can be accommodated by a cassette-based system, indeed some accounts programs have been specially designed to use cassettes. But beware, at some stage you may want to expand the system; can you convert the software to run on disk or will you have to upgrade and use a completely different program? For serious business use a disk system should be considered but there are a number of programs that can be used with either, making later upgrades painless. As far as serious applications are concerned CP/M gives Amstrad an edge through the large number of available programs, many of which have already been configured to run on the machine.

If the software is up to the job, a computer system can offer a number of advantages over conventional book keeping. As more small businesses make use of machines like the Amstrad, then a greater emphasis will be placed on teaching the user how to keep, and understand accounts. Friendly and easy to use software should encourage the user to keep full records by making the task less onerous, and any accounting system should make retrieval of information easy, otherwise the purpose is lost. Since a Balance Sheet is the product of the other accounts and a lot of calculation, they are time consuming to prepare manually. Yet the information that such a report can offer is too valuable to be seen once a year. A computer system can produce information reports at frequent intervals. Imagine how useful a regular supply of month-end accounts would be to understanding how well a business is performing.

Our belief in the Amstrad's potential as a small business machine will be reflected in **AMTIX!** through articles and by encouraging a dialogue in the letters pages, as well offering advice on the use of relevant software. But, if you bought your Amstrad with the intention of using it for business application, don't forget, you can always get over the depression caused by the latest estimated tax bill by playing a game; Straddles is good at that too.

TALK TO A LONELY AMSTRAD



Since the only cure for a lonely 'Straddles' is a good communications interface, of one sort or another, we have put together a mini review of the **KDS Communicator 104**. This modem, as well as the many others that are emerging, will be examined in greater depth in future issues of **AMTIX!** (hope you're not getting bored of that phrase yet)!.

The KDS modem has been designed to communicate with Prestel type systems and with the more hobbyist bulletin boards. The modem attaches directly onto the Amstrad's disk port, the connector allowing the disk interface to be connected behind. Power is provided via the unit's own supply. The Busby connection is made directly by plugging a phone wall socket. On the unit's front is a display that indicates what the modem is up to.

The modem contains its own software routines in a sideways ROM. To bring the modem into operation type **|MODEM**, and then software takes over offering a series of menus. The three options on the opening menu allow selection of the protocols appropriate for Prestel or a standard 300/300 baud bulletin board. The third option allows for customised protocols. The auto-dial and auto-answer options are offered by the second menu. So, to get to Prestel for example, all you need do is to call up the modem, select Prestel and then **D** for auto-dial; dial the number and log on in the normal way.

The resident software provides lower level routines. **|GET**, for example, retrieves a character from the input buffer. Clearly that type of command can only be used effectively from within a program. You could use **|GET** in a program of your own to transfer each of the 1024 bytes from a Prestel page to a disk or tape drive. The other software routines are expected to be used in the same way, within the user's own programs, but examples are given with the documentation. On the whole the system is easy to use, neat and flexible but, at £153 it might soon begin to look a little pricey. To date it does not have Telecom approval.

In the near future you can expect to see the choice of modems widen. **Honeysoft** have just completed their CP/M compatible communications board and are working with **Circuit Holdings** to produce an interface/software/modem package which will be available soon for just £29.99. Amstrad's very own, all singing all dancing, RS232 interface is now in supply. Amstrad don't sell a modem of their own but the interface can be used with a wide variety of off-the-shelf models. Skywave Software are also about to release **Multiport** which not only offers a full RS232 specification but a 24 bit parallel port to boot. They also intend to offer a modem/interface package that, among other things, allows access to their own bulletin board, Skytel. The Skywave publicity blurb claims that their's is the first and only Micronet approved product, but I don't think Micronet care how you talk to them just so long as you do.

To date poor old Straddles has been left a bit in the dark as far as Prestel is concerned but, on the 1st of October that will change when the Amstrad database, operated jointly by Micronet and Viewfax 258, goes on line. We will bring you news of that development plus full reviews of the other communication hardware in (guess what?) future issues of **AMTIX!**.

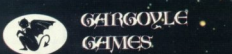


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Meet ROBIN CANDY, a right little cult in his own time and the resident games tipster in AMTIX! As this is just a sample, Robin is publishing tips in this issue that act as a teaser for what is to come

DUN DARACH

If *Dun Darach*, the graphical adventure from **Gargoyle Games**, has been puzzling you over the past couple of months as it has me then you might just find these tips useful.

To find **Teth** you must first go to the **Old Quarter** and buy or steal a statue. Now take this to the **Soke** or **Ratha de** and follow the rat that wanders the streets. In **Claw Lane** the rat will disappear for a few seconds, stand on the spot from where it disappeared and press Enter; you will now be in **Darch Down**. Inside Darch Down is Teth. Give Teth the statue and in return he will give you the **d—key**; this unlocks the locked door in the castle.

MINDER

Need some help on **DK'tronics'** *Minder*? Are the dealers always out when you need them? Well fear no more because these tips give you the low down on the low down. Now you can flog your hot goods before Chisholm has time to catch up with you. Just follow this guide and the millions should follow!

8am: Waring
9am: Waring/Page/Tonick/Watt
10am: Page/Tonick/Watt
11am: Page/Tonick/Watt
12noon: Tonick
1pm: Tonick/Carr
2pm: Tonick/Oddgood
3pm: Takeall/Tonick/Carr
4pm: Tonick/Oddgood
5pm: Waring/Carr
6pm: Waring/Carr
7pm: Waring/Carr
8pm: Carr
9pm:
10pm: Bott
11pm: Bott
12midnight: Bott
1am: Bott

When a dealer isn't in his lockup he will be at the Winchester Club.

FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING

Elite's recent hit is easy enough to get the hang of but if you're having trouble getting on to the next boxers then here are some codes to help. Each code must be used with the initials **MRB**

IQ5IOGA5 — Fling Long Chop
AK9IONEM7 — Andra Puncheredov
CO3INBML8 — Tribal Trouble
BI7INLKM6 — Frenchie

TECHNICIAN TED

These tips on the order of the tasks in *Technician Ted* by **Hewson Consultants** will be a big help but even with this list I'm sure you'll agree that it is still a tough game to crack

You must complete these tasks within the time limits printed by each one.

Ted's Desk by 8:56
Silicon Slice Store by 9:09
Slice Diffusion by 9:27
Fuming Cupboard by 9:58
Clean Room by 10:07
Silicon Etching Plant by 10:22
Canteen by 10:40
Photocopier by 11:12
Boardroom by 11:25
Slice Surface Abrasion by 11:56
Laser Slice Separation by 12:15
Bay 7 by 12:34
Micro Chip Mounting by 12:59
Tea Machine 13:02
Power Generator by 13:18
Electro Plating Bath by 14:00
Quality Assurance Dept 14:25
Abrasion Dust Extract by 14:38
Matthew's Lair by 14:58
We Call Him Sir by 15:50
The Wage Department by 16:07

After completing the Wage Department then you must go to the picket line, up to the Union flag and again down to the Picket line (in the middle). From here you can now go left and into a new room called **OK! WHERE DO I GET MY REWARD.** Go into this room and walk left through the exit room to complete the game, BUT you MUST have kept within the time limit to do so.

They wouldn't let me have much and I've just about filled up my allotted space for this issue but next month there will be much, much more. If you have any tips, pokes etc then send them to me and you could win a fabulous AMTIX! T-shirt. The address to send all your info to is:
ROBIN CANDY, AMTIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.

NEWS

ADVENTURE WRITER

If you want to be a bit creative with your Amstrad and you enjoy adventure games, then a modest investment in a new book called *Writing Adventure Games on the Amstrad* from **Melbourne House** (£6.95) might be worthwhile. The book describes what adventure games are, how to play them and how to write them. Authors Mike Lewis and Simon Price show how to define the problems and break them down into structured elements, as well as more advanced techniques like text compression. A sample adventure is provided, written using the authors' own Adventure Kernel System (AKS). The book is available direct from Melbourne House, Castle Yard House, Castle Yard, Richmond TW10 6TF.

NEW AMSTRAD MAGAZINE

Newsfield Publications have launched a new monthly magazine for Amstrad owners! Called AMTIX!, it will be a lively, instructive and enjoyable read, say co-editors **Jeremy Spencer** and **Roger Kean**. 'A debt of gratitude is owed to the newspaper *Computer Trade Weekly*,' says Roger, 'for having insisted on the exclamation mark in **AMTIX!** when they were informed about the launch. Without their expertise in marketing techniques and consumer appreciation, we may never have seen the vital importance of a ! in the title. The ! is just one small example of the kind of attention to detail readers can expect from this new Amstrad-related publishing venture.'

Another closely guarded secret is the fact that Jeremy Spencer's Amstrad, Arnold, actually named the new magazine. It was asked for a jolly sounding name beginning with AM and consisting of no more than 6 letters, and promptly began spewing out yards of paper from the printer. Next to 'AMJZGY', which sounds good but refuses to be pronounced by anyone other than a Pole, came 'AMTIX'. Arnold, of course, hadn't been asked for an !.

LOOKING AHEAD

Between now and the New Year, Amstrad owners can look forward to a veritable cornucopia of new and exciting games. We haven't got enough space in this edition to devote to all the games, but here's a selection:

Terrormolinos (Melbourne House) is an 'adventure' in the style of their earlier *Hampstead*, featuring a family on a dreadful package holiday in Spain. Still in the adventure vein, the remarkable icon-driven espionage game *The Fourth Protocol* (Hutchinson) is expected to repeat its 64 and Spectrum success on the Amstrad; programmers The Electronic Pencil Co, are now at work on an action strategy/adventure based on those prehistoric toy monsters, the Zoids, for Martech — release date not yet set, but the price will be around £8-£9. Another Spectrum/64 hit out soon is *Cauldron* (Palace) and other games of similar ilk include *Dynamite Dan* (Mirrorsoft), a *JSW*-style game where you have to explore a large, elegant mansion (they also have an Amstrad version of *Boulderdash II* at £9.95 on the way); *Nodes of Yesod* (Odin) — a big Spectrum/64 hit set on the moon that boasts excellent graphics and music and which should be shortly followed by their *Robin o' the Wood*; then there's the Bond tie-in *A View to a Kill* (Domark), and Ocean have just announced *Rambo* based on the controversial movie.

Gremlin Graphics have a sizeable line-up kicking off with the space ship maze game *Project Future*, a Spanish 'Punch Out' boxing game called *Rocco* and their big hit *Wanted: Monty Mole*. Mole fans can also watch out for the follow up *Monty on the Run*, versions of which can be seen on the Newsfield PCW Show stand. All the Gremlin games will £8.95. Beyond too, have a good line up — there's the fabulous Midnight Trilogy *Lords of Midnight*, *Doomdark's Revenge* and *Eye of the Moon*, which will be released one at a time, then their exciting icon-driven adventure *Shadowfire* with the sequel *Enigma Force* planned to follow it and, a Christmas release of *Superman*. Denton Designs who programmed *Shadowfire* were also responsible for *Frankie Goes to Hollywood* (Ocean) and the Amstrad version of this extraordinary game should be ready any day. Ocean's other half, Imagine, is releasing *World Series Basketball* right now at £8.95.

As we preview in this issue, *Marsport* (Gargoyle Games) is expected sometime next month, and hopefully a version of their Christmas 'fun package' *Sweevo's World* (c'mon guys, you can do it)! Sticking to the graphic adventure, *Dragontorc of Avalon* (Hewson) should be available by the end of this month, and so should the gentle *Elidon* from Orpheus, which was a success on the 64. Some other games that are about to hit on the 64 and are also planned for the Amstrad include the astonishing *Pet Person* (Activision — disk only), which turns your computer into an intelligent goldfish bowl! From the same house there's *Ballblazer*, a furious two-player, split screen 3D soccer-type game, *Boxing* and *Rescue on Fractalus* (all £14.99 disk and £9.99 cass).

Fans of the cartoon hero *Popeye*, will soon be able to enjoy him on computer (DK'tronics), currently a Spectrum hit with its big animated characters. For people who like a brain challenge with some action, look out for *Archon* (Ariolasoft), a game similar to chess but with some arcade-like sequences in it. Last but not least, for the pure strategist, there's *War Zone* (CCS) coming soon at £6.95.

Look out for previews and full reviews between now and Christmas in **AMTIX!**.

STRADDLING THE ATLANTIC

Commodore and Sinclair can't have been too surprised by Amstrad's decision to bring the 128K **6128** to these shores so soon after its, supposedly, American only debut. The new machine is very much a 664 with an extra 64K of memory, an improved sound chip and some additional BASIC commands, that allow programmers to manipulate the new memory blocks, but they have to be loaded in from disk before they can be used. The 6128 comes with CP/M v.3.0 which is necessary to use paged memory blocks. Since the memory area is now so much bigger the TPA (Transient Program Area) is greatly enlarged and allows more CP/M programs to be run on this machine than on the two previous versions. Included with CP/M is *GSX*, a utility designed to enable CP/M programs to handle graphics. This could, in theory, enable the use of icons and windows within CP/M programs, but to date only two packages use the system, *DR Graph* and *DR Draw*.

At a price of £299 for the monochrome monitor and £399 for the colour version the new machine makes nonsense of the current price structure. No doubt the 664 and the 464 have had their day. Have Amstrad considered the possibility of a slightly cut down 464, for the lower end of the market?

GOING IN SIDEWAYS

One of the Amstrad's strongest features is its ability to accommodate sideways ROMS. The two leaders in this field, **Superpower** and **Arnor**, have recently extended their product ranges. Arnor have launched a word processor and *Utopia*, a BASIC utilities ROM based on the BBC *Toolkit* ROM. The word processor has impressive specifications, no doubt if we ask nicely they will let us have a look at it. Superpower already has a Disk utilities and a mailing list ROM. Their latest addition is a BASIC programmer's utility. Each Superpower ROM costs £39.95.

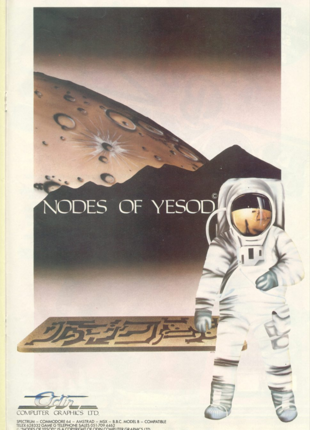
EXPANDING COMMUNICATIONS

Amstrad users can soon join the ranks of Spectrum, Commodore and BBC owners when they have their own slot on **Micronet**. On the 1st October the Amstrad microbase will open, offering the sorts of services that have been enjoyed by the other micro owners. The service will be operated by Micronet and Viewfax 258. The contents of the 2,500 plus pages is expected to evolve as the requirements of the users become clearer. But you can expect to be able to make use of facilities such as mailbox, telesoftware and news.

NEXT MONTH (17th OCTOBER) THE WORLD OF THE AMSTRAD BURSTS WIDE OPEN WITH AMTIX! ISSUE 1!!

Make sure you put your order for AMTIX! in at your local newsagent NOW. Or grab the opportunity to subscribe for twelve months here and now (and take advantage of the three FREE Incentive games). You can talk to anyone on the Newsfield stand (No 3042 on the Gallery, National Hall), or send in the form from the advert in this issue with your payment.

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